

# WORKING WITH YOUR PARENTS: HOW TO COMMUNICATE

**PARENTS MAY CUT THEIR TEEN'S RISK IN HALF IF THEY SET DRIVING RULES AND MONITOR THEM IN A SUPPORTIVE, NON-CONTROLLING WAY.**

Learning to drive isn't easy. That's why it takes commitment – from you and your parents (or another trusted adult). Your parent or guardian will need to monitor your driving activities for the first year of driving on your own and continue to help you practice new skills. With their help, you will become an experienced, skilled driver.

To help reduce the stress and arguing that develop during the permit period, we propose making the car a 'nag-free' zone, one where you can concentrate on learning to drive.

## WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

**KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN.** To be successful, it's crucial to create the right learning environment. The car may seem like the right place to discuss a wide range of topics with your parents. It still can be but not when you're behind the wheel. Heavy topics are best left for discussion in a safe environment. In the car try to restrict the talk to driving-related topics. Keep this in mind when you and your family develop 'House Rules.'

**ESTABLISH A 'SAFE SPACE' TO TALK OUTSIDE THE CAR.** Agree to discuss anything sensitive or important somewhere calm outside the car—the front steps, living room, or backyard swing—the choice is yours. Be sure to follow through. You'll have to talk about it sometime. Don't put it off.

**IT'S OKAY TO TELL YOUR PARENT TO 'CHILL OUT.'** An angry parent is one of the worst distractions. Politely encourage your mom or dad to count to 10, save the criticism for later, and stay focused on teaching.

**LEARN TO ACCEPT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.** When your parent gives you focused and specific feedback on your driving performance, accept it and learn from it.



# SEEKING OUT DIFFERENT AVENUES TO GET HELP AND EXPERIENCE

**NEARLY TWO THIRDS OF TEENS REPORTED THAT AT LEAST 2 DIFFERENT ADULTS WERE INVOLVED IN HELPING THEM HOW TO DRIVE.**

■ The Florida law requires teens to have 50 hours of behind-the-wheel practice before testing for their driver license. Your parent/guardian may not be available to be there the whole time. Who else can you go to for help?

- One option is to look into instruction from a professional driving instructor. Be sure to find one that is a good fit for your family's budget and your personal learning style.
- Enlist the help of another trusted adult (21+ with valid driver license), with your parent's approval. This could be a family member, neighbor or family friend. Find someone that is willing to invest the time in you and willing to help teach driving skills.
- Ask your school counselor or Driver's Ed instructor for advice to locate a qualified adult or professional driving school.



## TIPS FOR TEENS

- Always Buckle Up.
- Obey the speed limit.
- Use your turn signals.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Focus on driving – the road and the conditions around you.
- Avoid distractions – Do not use your cell phone, eat or drink while driving.
- Get directions before you leave.
- Leave early so you do not feel the need to rush.

